

Maryland Penitentiary—The average population for this institution during the past year has been 1,150. About one-half are employed in the maintenance of the institution and in the various State Use Shops, which includes Shoe, Printing, Auto Tag, Sewing, Woodwork and Brush, Metal, Mattress and Upholstery, and Knitting Departments, and a Machine Shop.

Total value of the products sold to other State Agencies in 1940 was \$254,000.00, with 353 inmates employed in this work. The physical plant of the institution has been considerably improved. In an effort to employ a larger number of prisoners the officials are studying possibilities for the establishment of additional State Use Shops.

PAROLE AND PROBATION

New legislation was enacted by your body in 1939, materially strengthening the machinery for the handling of cases of parole. This system has been operating satisfactorily under the administration of Herman M. Moser, the Director.

It would seem obvious that the State has everything to gain by an efficiently operated parole system, because if inmates of our penal institutions can be reclaimed and restored to society as worthwhile citizens, incalculable good will result to those individuals and their families. In addition, the more that can be liberated, with safety and without jeopardizing the welfare of society, the less the State will have to pay for the incarceration of its prisoners.

In Maryland, 67.1% of the male prisoners committed during 1938 on serious charges had previously been incarcerated; and, according to the last available data from the Federal Bureau of Census, Maryland imprisons 481 individuals per 100,000 of population. The general average for the Country is 144 cases per 100,000. There are, then, three times as many commitments to prison in Maryland, in proportion to the population, as the average for the Country at large.

Parole is a system of conditional release for prison inmates, under which post-custodial authority is exercised by the State. It does not absolve the offender of remaining punishment, the convict being permitted merely to leave the prison by privilege and not as a matter of right. It is the method of discriminate release from penal institutions, which experience has shown to be the most effective. The use of parole to bridge the transition period from the regulated, supervised life of the prison to the freedom of the community is sound, common sense. Parole is not to be confused with leniency, but on the contrary, it must be regarded as a valuable additional protection to the public safety.

The 1939 Act likewise provided that the Parole Officers of the Division of Parole and Probation "shall whenever feasible" be available to the Judges of the County Courts to make investigations and supervise persons released under suspended sentences. Another forward step taken under the 1939 Act was to provide that all inmates should thereafter be automatically considered for release on parole, without the necessity of their making applications or having applications made for them.